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The ADC Disciple

Anabaptist Disciples of Christ is an affiliation of Conservative Anabaptist churches seeking likeminded fellowship, instruction, and accountability in church administration and congregational life in the Biblical pattern of the Apostolic church.

Building Spiritual Relationships

by Merle Burkholder

When I was in high school, I spent my summers working in the concrete plant where my father was part owner. Sam was a cement salesman who came to the business every week to sell cement. He learned to know me and took an interest in me. Sam was fifty years old, and I was fifteen.

When Sam came each week, he would visit with my father about cement. Then he would come out to the plant and find me wherever I was working. He would talk with me and often would take me to the break room and buy me a Mountain Dew. Sometimes Sam would take me to sports events for an evening. I knew Sam didn't have to do these things in order to sell cement. He genuinely liked me and took an interest in my life.

One summer I was operating a front-end loader. There had been a problem with its power steering. I had talked with the mechanics in the shop, but they hadn't fixed it. After some time, I was getting frustrated with the bad steering. One day, the steering wheel spun backwards and the knob on the steering wheel hit the crazy bone in my elbow.

In a moment of pain and rage I went into the shop. I found the shop foreman and told him what I thought of his ability to schedule jobs in the shop. I berated him for not paying attention to the steering on the loader I was driving. I was angry and said a lot of harsh things.

When I turned to leave the shop, there was Sam! Sam took me by the arm and led me around the corner of the building. He backed me up against the wall and leaned in over me. He proceeded to tell me that what I had just done was wrong. He told me that if I was ever going to be the kind of man he thought I was going to be, I had a lot to learn about how to relate to people and deal with disappointments.

He told me that I needed to go back into the shop, find the shop foreman, and apologize for what I had just said. I should tell him that I will drive the loader without the steering fixed as long as I need to and that if he ever schedules it into the shop and repairs it, I will say thank you.

Sam also said he was going to go with me to do that. So, we went back into the shop, and I followed Sam's instructions. Then we went to the break room where Sam bought me a Mountain Dew, and all was well.

As a fifteen-year-old, I needed a man like Sam. If you have people in your life who care enough about you to help you know how to deal with life situations, do not reject them!

Scripture gives us examples of three types of spiritual relationships that are important for us to have.

Mentor or Coach

Timothy had the Apostle Paul as his mentor or coach. Paul discipled him. In II Timothy 3:10 –11 Paul gives Timothy a list of things he has seen in the life of Paul. This list is a good list of things we gain from having a mentor or coach.

1. Doctrine: What is the correct belief system? What can I know to be true?
2. Manner of life: How do I live out my beliefs?
3. Purpose: What is worth living for? What should my short-term and long-term goals and objectives be?
4. Faith: What can I put my trust in?
5. Patience: When do I wait, and when do I act?
6. Love: How do I show love in relationships?
7. Perseverance: How do I keep going and not lose hope when things are difficult? How do I cope when things go wrong?
8. Persecutions: How do I respond to opposition and personal attacks on me and my character?
9. Afflictions: How do I deal with long-term hindrances or difficulties?

Our mentors can be people we admire. They may have a character quality that we want to develop in our own lives. They may be people who have written books that impact us and give us direction for our lives. They are often the people who we turn to for advice.

I encourage you to seek out Godly mentors. It would be nice if they sought you out. But that probably will not happen, so you can take the initiative.

Some people may feel intimidated to be thought of as mentors. Perhaps it is best to ask a prospective mentor if you can get together and ask some questions. After you have done this a few times you can see if it seems like a good fit and a helpful relationship. Then perhaps your times together can become more formal with regular input and discussions.

Peer or Co-laborer

It is important to have people with whom we are working toward common goals and objectives. These friends are often in our

same age group and at a similar stage in life. They can empathize with us in the challenges we are going through.

Paul and Barnabas were co-laborers. They worked and traveled together to bring the Gospel to places where Christ was not known. They encouraged each other. They faced challenges together. We need these types of people in our lives.

With these people we rejoice and weep together. We share accountability for the important aspects of our lives. These people know us well and help us to fulfill our commitments and live out our faith.

These are the people who are our intimate friends and associates. They help us carry our burdens. They know when to wound us so that we can heal. They know our secrets and show us the love of God despite our weaknesses and failures. They celebrate our successes.

Follower or Disciple

These are people in whom we are investing time and energy to help them be all that God wants them to be. We see the potential that God sees in them. We encourage them and guide them through their challenging seasons.

In I Timothy 4:12–16 Paul gives Timothy advice and direction for his life. He tells Timothy not to allow anyone to despise him because he is young but to be an example to the believers.

The list of things he is to exemplify resemble the earlier list of things Paul told Timothy about Paul's own life. Timothy was to take the things he had learned from observing Paul's life and demonstrate them to others. He was a disciple, but he was also to be a mentor to others.

I encourage you to look for those who want your influence. Be intentional in connecting with them. Pay attention to those who are younger than you but still get close to you and follow your conversations with others. Who are the younger people who like to talk with you? Who watches you or listens to you when you are in a group setting?

Intentionally do things with these people. Start conversations with them. Ask them questions about their lives. Take them with you when you are going to do things. If you are traveling for ministry, take a younger person with you. Go out of your way to talk with these individuals. Ask how you can pray for them. See if they would like to meet with you.

I believe that the value of having people we are discipling is that it keeps us challenged to be worthy of being followed. It helps us to be serious about the type of example we give to others. Mentoring reminds us that our own choices and way of life have consequences, not only for ourselves, but also for those who are following us.

I believe that these three types of relationships are important for each of us. Learn from others. Find mentors for your life. Be accountable and have co-laborers. Invest in the lives of others.

The book of Proverbs is based on the assumption that wisdom can be passed on from one generation to another. Be part of that wisdom chain! Gain wisdom and pass it on to others.

- Merle Burkholder

Merle is an ordained minister in the Mid-Atlantic Mennonite Fellowship. He and his wife Edith currently serve with Believers Fellowship in Sioux Lookout, Ontario, Canada. Believers Fellowship is a ministry of Mission Interest Committee (MIC).

PASTOR SPOTLIGHT

Wilbur Yoder serves as Lead Pastor of the Fairhaven Mennonite church in Indiana. He and his wife Kaylene have four children – Joshua, married to Megan (Beachy); Jade, married to Brian Landis; Joe; and Jackie, married to Anthony Bontrager. Wilbur and Kaylene also have three grandchildren. Wilbur's occupation is farming.

Wilbur was first ordained January 23, 2000 as an associate minister and then on March 16, 2003 was ordained as Lead Pastor.

He recommends the book *Outlive Your Life* by Max Lucado.

Wilbur reflects on his pastoral journey: "I am continually amazed at the working of the Holy Spirit in people's lives and how God blesses the efforts of faithful Christians, Pastors, and laity.

I am looking forward to taking a lesser role in several years.

With God, all things are possible."

Thank you Wilbur and Kaylene for your service to the Church!

Praying WITH People

Do you desire to see God at work in your communities? The fact is HE IS! The reality is our spiritual eyes are often blinded to His work in the lives around us by the cares of this life, the deception of the enemy, and the constant barrage of information. This is becoming clearer to us as we work here in Southeast Asia.

We serve under Destinations International, the mission agency of the Biblical Mennonite Alliance. We have been involved in a teaching and savings program called SALT Microfinance Solutions, a program of Christian Aid Ministries, for the last 3 years. Specifically, we are working to implement a concept called Savings Groups. The Savings Group aspect of SALT simply provides structure and teaching that helps a community work together to save money so clients can take out small loans. It has been a stretching process for our family while also being rewarding to see how God has brought everything together. We have six local staff with about 17 Savings Groups totaling 226 members. We are hoping to expand more this year. We just completed our first translation of the 42-lesson business student manual which has spiritual and financial content. We are hoping to have the first printing of the manual in October. It has been quite the journey to say the least! Even though we had been locked down in our homes off and on the last six months, it still feels like we all have been able to learn the importance of working together through a crisis.

It seems as if our team is still in its developing stage. Even though we arrived in January of 2016, the initial members of our first venture mutually spread out into different countries. At first, neither we nor our board members were quite sure what God was up to, but as we all diverged, we felt God wanted us to stay. Another family from our home church joined us last November, helping us form a team once again—which was quite an answer to prayer. Now we are once again as a team seeking to join the Lord in His work here.

Our teammates are involved in language study currently and have finished up a Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) certificate program in hopes of joining our local non-governmental organization (NGO) in the near future. This COVID-19 period enabled them to spend more dedicated time on acquiring that certificate, since the English Center where one of them was teaching closed.

This crisis has helped all our groups see the value of being connected to God, to a church body, and to a Savings Group that can support them when they can no longer work. One group was able to help give towards their evangelism program. This was definitely exciting to hear, since this is our heart to see God's Kingdom grow here.

This week we have seen a steady rise in COVID cases which has increased the level of fear in people's lives. You can see it in people's eyes as the lockdowns increase. Will they lose their jobs? How will they provide food for their family? These are the questions I hear from savings groups and others we talk with on a regular basis. It is difficult to know at times how we can help; however, one main thing we as a team are learning is the power of prayer WITH people.

In my growing up years, I learned a lot about praying for people. This is great and is highly effective! However, the more I am involved in prayer, I see the immense value of praying WITH people. I recently had a friend, Z, who asked me to sit down and drink some coffee with him. After listening to him share the challenges he was facing in his family, I asked him if it was okay if I prayed for him. He said, "Yes." Right there in the restaurant I asked God to move mightily in his life. When I finished, he told me he had strength now. I could see it by the smile on his face. How powerful God is! Just last week he showed up again and told me God answered my prayer. God solved his family problems. May God continue to draw his heart to Himself.

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Here are three simple steps I believe will have an eternal impact on people's lives as we are on mission in this world:

1. **Begin talking WITH people. You will not see God at work in other people's lives unless you interact with them.**
2. **Listen to their felt needs WITH them. Let them talk and share what they are going through, then you will know how to pray for them.**
3. **Pray to the Lord for them while being WITH them. Wherever you are, in whatever place, and at whatever time, is where God seeks to be sought.**

During the first three months under lockdown, it felt as though our Savings Groups program was suffering, our team was suffering, and even my family was suffering. God began working on me as a leader on my role in influencing the morale of my team. He began showing me areas in my own life which needed purifying. He revealed how Jesus constantly had His prayer time WITH the Father, continually called His house (the Church) the House of Prayer, and in John 17 Jesus prayed for His disciples while being WITH them. How do we know what Jesus prayed? We know because Luke wrote it down. He was WITH Jesus while He was praying for them. Can you imagine how powerful that was in their lives? It even impacts us today. When we read His prayer for us, we can hear God Himself praying WITH us. God is a God Who is WITH us. Who was Jesus? Matthew 1:23 says, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, GOD WITH US." God is WITH us, Jesus is WITH us, and the Holy Spirit is WITH us. How awesome is that?! Are we praying WITH people? **Are we going to help others be WITH Him?**

- LS

If you want to know more about this overseas ministry, send an email to James@ayrcabinet.com.

ADC Church Profile —

Lake Grace Mennonite Church is located in southeast Georgia in the small town of Jesup. It was founded in 1982 when two families - Joe and Sadie Overholt and John and Ruth Hershberger - settled on some land to farm and a vision to start an Anabaptist church started to become reality. Very quickly more families moved in and those early years were special years working together and connecting with the community.

Lake Grace is a church family that has around mid-50s in membership and in the mid-80s for Sunday morning attendance.

Lake Grace is located about an hour from the east coast (the Golden Isles area) and about an hour from the Florida line. The church is in the transition area between the coastal low country and fairly good farmland. A lot of peanuts, cotton, and corn along with pecan groves and many planted pines are found locally.

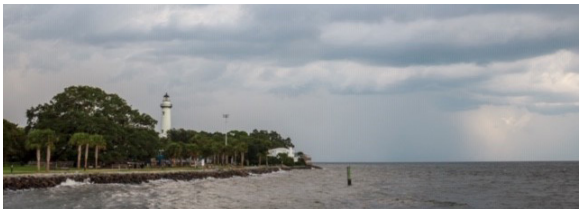
Pastor Gene Miller writes – "We love the Lord and we do want to be His hands and feet in Jesup. We have our own school which serves our own families as well as some community households. We have had an active Kid's Club for a number of years but with the COVID situation we have taken a break. We've had an ongoing connection with and support a ministry in Africa, are very involved with Choice Books, and have quite a bit of connection with the people around us. Working together, helping neighbors through hurricane clean up, hosting widows' banquets, and serving in other ways are all part of being a blessing in our community.

We probably have between 30-35 different church home roots among us so we may not fit everybody's 'box' but we are ok with that😊.

Our culture here is laid back but you better stay sharp on your yes ma'ams and yes sirs if you want to get along with people 😊.

We love the Lord and plan to carry the light and love of God here in southern Georgia. It's been a crazy year so keep us in your prayers and you all stop in sometime."

Gene Miller, Lead Pastor
Marcus Miller, Associate Pastor



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